Short-term Study Abroad Tips and Suggestions
Indonesia

Keep in Touch

1. Make a plan to keep in touch, but be aware it may take time to set up your lines of communication. So, do not make promises to connect with family and friends immediately upon arrival in the host country.
2. Your cell phone may be locked or fail to function in the host country. You should be prepared to purchase a cheap phone and an international calling card once you are in the host country.
3. If you have a smart phone, research apps that allow you to call for free or cheaply.
4. Skype is another option you might explore.
5. You might consider setting up a blog where you post your best pictures and comments about your trip.
6. Snail mail, especially in the form of postcards, remains a welcome treat for your stay-at-home family and friends.

Create a Paper Trail

1. You are encouraged to enroll in S.T.E.P. (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program). STEP allows the American Embassy to know where you are at all times. Visit this site: https://step.state.gov/step/
2. Photocopy the page of your passport that includes your picture and passport number. Send a copy along with your study abroad application.
3. Designate an emergency contact person with whom you leave copies of: 1) your passport, 2) credit cards information, 3) airline ticket insurance, 4) international student medical insurance, and 5) immunization records. Provide this contact information to your faculty director.

Health Information

1. EvCC requires that short-term study abroad students have international student medical insurance, recommended through EvCC. The cost of this insurance is the sole responsibility of the student.
2. Studying abroad can be stressful. If you have experienced any mental health concerns in the past, EvCC encourages you to check in with your counselor to develop a mental health plan.
3. If you require a medical alert bracelet, wear it during your travels.
4. If you have a chronic disease, become familiar with the words that describe it in your host country’s language.
5. If you have a chronic health condition, work with the faculty director to identify a health care facility/provider within your host country in case you should need to seek medical care.
6. If you have an allergy to food, communicate this through the application process. Bring all medical supplies available to facilitate with an adverse reaction and educate your faculty director about how to aid you during an incident.
7. See your dentist prior to departure.
8. If you take a prescription medicine, you need to arrange for an adequate supply for the duration of your travels.
9. Keep all medications in their original containers. Do not mix different medications, prescription or over-the-counter, in one bottle.
10. Know both the brand and generic names of your medications.
11. Carry a copy of the original prescription with you.
12. If you are bringing controlled substances such as ADD medications or antidepressants have your healthcare provider provide you with a letter stating they prescribed the medication and you are under their care.

**Immunizations**

1. Make sure you are up to date on your routine immunizations. These include:
   - MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella)
   - Tetanus
   - Varicella (if you have not had chicken pox).
2. Students studying abroad, in Indonesia should discuss the following immunizations with their health care provider:
   - Typhoid
   - Hepatitis A (virus spread by food and water).
   - Hepatitis B (virus spread by bodily fluids)
   - Meningitis
   - Seasonal influenza
3. Students traveling to Indonesia are required to bring a prescription anti-diarrheal or a doctor’s note indicating that such medicines are counter-indicated.
4. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) details information regarding immunizations, health risks, and disease outbreaks specific to a destination.
   - A formal travel consultation is strongly recommended for optimal travel preparation, ideally six or more weeks prior to departure.

**Packing Smart**

1. Be sure to review your luggage limitations.
2. Dress smart and work from the packing list.
   a. Plan your clothing so that you can mix and match several outfits.
   b. Select clothing that is lightweight, resists wrinkles, and dries fast.
   c. Avoid tight-fitting clothing; besides the cultural taboos that may be broken, there is a reason that people in tropical locales wear loose clothing. Think: hot and sweaty and fungal.
      • Light, cotton underclothing, or specialty fabrics are best. Heavy materials do not dry as quickly.
      • Avoid colored underwear in case you react to dyes. Sweating can bring on such reactions in some persons.
3. Want more room for souvenirs? Here are a few suggestions (besides packing light):
   a. Bring clothes that may not be your favorites. Then leave these behind as donations.
b. Consider the buddy system. Many items can be shared. Coordinate these purchases before your leave the United States, or consider splitting the costs with one of your fellow travelers on items bought in Indonesia.
c. Scan all the pages of your travel guides and store in a cloud.
d. Consider using audiobooks, rather than print versions, for your light reading.

**Electronics**

1. Consider leaving bulky laptops at home and replace them with smart phones, notebooks, or tablets.
   a. If you do not own one of these, investigate whether your campus has check-outs that you could bring, or if you can borrow one.
   b. Ma Chung University does have a computer lab, which you can use during those days you are in Malang.
2. Wi-Fi access is available but may have restricted hours of use.
   a. There is Wi-Fi in each hotel, but likely not in your room.
   b. There is Wi-Fi in each room at the kosts (single gender dormitories).
3. Indonesia does not use the same electrical *adaptor* plugs as the United States. Adaptors are very inexpensive and easily packed. Bring two types (or buy in Indonesia):
   a. CEE 7/16 "Europlug" (Type C)
   b. CEE 7/4 “German Schuko”(Type F)
4. Bring a travel *converter* (NOT the same as an adaptor).
   b. Their use can save you money and heartache; this is especially important if you plan to bring expensive electronics.

**Jetlag**

1. Jetlag is a common issue for international travelers.
2. When you travel to Indonesia, you will cross the dateline. This means you “lose a day” (in addition to the travel time itself).
   a. For instance, if it is noon (12 p.m.) on a Saturday in Washington State, it will be 2 a.m. on Sunday in Malang, Indonesia (or 3 a.m. in Singoraja, Bali).
   b. Keep this in mind and realize some time to adjust to the time changes will be needed.
3. Strategies that will help you to decrease jetlag can be implemented before you go, on the plane, and once you arrive.
   a. *Before you go:*
      i. Exercise before you board the plane as it may help you relax and even sleep on the plane.
      ii. Alter your sleeping habits. About a week before you go, move the time you go to bed to more closely reflect Indonesian time.
      iii. Consult your doctor about melatonin before you pack this. While some travelers benefit from its use, others complain it causes fatigue. Dried cherries are a dietary source of melatonin and of roughage. You might consider this option.
iv. Consider setting up two clocks on your computer, one for U.S. time and the other for Indonesian time. Glance at these often before you go to get your mind in sync with the time changes.

b. **On the plane:**
   i. Immediately after boarding, change your watch to the next time zone in which you will be arriving.
   ii. Hydrate! Drink plenty of water, not alcohol. Drinking alcohol will negatively affect you attempts to overcome jetlag.
   iii. Be active. Get up often during the trip. At least once each hour stand up and walk around. Also, do seat calisthenics. Many websites provide suggestions or videos.
   iv. Freshen up. Go to the lavatory to wash your face and hands, brush your teeth, and comb your hair.
   v. Select a pair of shoes that are easily removed. Consider a pair of slip-ons, for instance. Never wear new shoes, high heels, or wing tips. Avoid choices that restrict blood flow.
   vi. Bring a flight pillow, noise-cancelling earplugs an eye mask, and a pair of comfortable socks or compression socks.

c. **Once you arrive:**
   i. Remember, your study abroad schedule is designed to aid your adjustment.
   ii. Try to avoid naps. Work on staying up and going to sleep with the locals.
   iii. Take a shower right before you sleep to refresh your body.
   iv. Exercise.
   v. Traveling west to east (such as you will on your return flight) is often more challenging. Besides implementing the suggestions above, consider giving yourself an extra 1-2 days to recover when you return state-side.

**Greetings and Gestures**

1. Absolutely avoid any behavior that results in embarrassment for your Indonesian hosts, your fellow students, or the faculty director.
   a. Do not publicly criticize a person, action, or the country. This is a great source of discomfort for most Indonesians.
   b. If you feel your concern is legitimate, take the faculty director aside and discuss the issue in private.
2. Practice your greetings in Bahasa Indonesia.
3. Smile at persons you meet, but do not hold eye contact for any length of time (especially women).
4. Do not shout or speak loudly. A quiet, firm vocal tone is the norm.
5. Do not display personal affection in public. Do not kiss, hold hands, or hug.
6. Do not cross your legs when sitting (unless at the ankles) and do not display the bottoms of your feet to others (feet are in contact with the dirt).
7. Hands:
   a. Never use your left hand for passing items, for shaking hands, or paying your bill.
   b. Do not wave with your left hand, but you may wave with both hands.
   c. There are several culturally appropriate handshakes. None consists of a “hearty” handshake. Subdued, not energetic, is your guide phrase.
d. Do not touch anyone on the top of the head.
e. Do not “crook” your finger to “call” someone over. A full hand motion, with the palm facing downward, is generally used.

Hygiene (Tips to Ensure a Healthy Trip)

1. One of the most often overlooked sources of contamination is money. Consider using hand sanitizer after each time you handle money.
2. Sanitation/food handing issues are a key to remember during a short-term study abroad program.
   a. Each day you are sick represents 5% or more of your time in Indonesia, not to mention that food poisoning/contamination is extremely uncomfortable.
   b. Further, your potential inability to participate in the program academics can lower your grade.
   c. If you are too sick to travel, you will be charged all expenses linked to additional hotel stays, chaperones, and altered internal travel arrangements.
3. You will be provided with drinking water at all hotels and the dormitories (kosts), as well as having access to bottled water when traveling.
   a. Consider purchasing a water bottle for use in Indonesia.
   b. You can fill it up at the kost each day and save the environment by reducing use of disposable bottles.
   c. Avoid water from the tap (including while showering or brushing your teeth) unless assured by your faculty director of its drinkability.
   d. Avoid using ice with your drinks, unless your faculty director gives the okay.
4. Suggestion: Consider adapting to the heat and humidity by taking several showers each day: once when you awake, once when you return for the day, and once before bedtime.
   a. You will feel so much more refreshed.
   b. In addition, you can rotate clothing around your shower schedule.
5. The squat toilet can be a challenge for Americans used to the sit-down style.
   a. Be prepared to avoid clothing that is hard to move out of the way.
   b. You might even practice the “technique” before arriving in Indonesia.
   c. Carry disposable wipes or tissues with you in case there is no toilet paper available.
   d. A suction cup hook (in case you need to hang up your clothes) is useful.

Finances

1. Internal country travel, housing, and most meals are covered by your study abroad program.
2. The cost of your Indonesian visa (upon entry into the country) must be in U.S. dollars ($25).
3. There are airport taxes required when leaving the country that must be paid in Indonesian rupiah (200,000 IDR).
4. If you travel between Java and Bali for the extension, plan for additional airport taxes of 200,000 IDR.
5. Be sure to review the schedule and calculate which meals are “on your own”. You can eat well and inexpensively in Indonesia, but you might consider one or two “splurges”.
6. Avoid bringing large amounts of American cash. Instead consider these options:
a. Check your bank, credit union, or with organizations such as AAA (if you are a member) to convert some of your money into Indonesian rupiah (IDR).
   i. In larger hotels and cities, you probably should bring denominations of 100,000 IDR and 50,000 IDR.
   ii. For purchases in “mom and pop: stores or in smaller cities, bring 10,000 IDR, 5,000 IDR, 2000 IDR, and 1000 IDR.

b. The use of credit cards at ATMs is a good strategy, but be sure your card can be read internationally. It is imperative you check with your bank prior to leaving the U.S.

c. Debit/credit cards can be used, but many Indonesians do not have experience with debit cards. Be prepared to explain that your card can be used as a credit card.

d. Not all businesses, even large ones, accept credit cards. Some may accept, but charge an extra fee.

Gift-giving (Suggestion Only)

1. Ask your faculty director when it is proper to gift someone.
2. Giving small gifts is a common practice in Indonesia (the local name for such is *oleh oleh*).
3. Consider purchasing small, inexpensive items that represent you and your college.
   a. These might be a picture book of your state.
   b. Items that have your school logo are popular.
4. You will encounter many children on your trip.
   a. It is good idea to carry individually wrapped candies or other items that are age-appropriate with you.
   b. You might consider buying a packet of children’s party favors. These are very inexpensive.
   c. Stickers are a big hit and are very easy to pack.

Tipping (Suggestion Only)

5. Ask your faculty director when it is proper to tip.
6. Usually, in a “mom-and-pop” style restaurant, leaving your change from the bill is appreciated, but not culturally expected.
7. For students who are willing, you might consider collecting 10,000 rupiah (about 90 cents) each day to tip the van/bus drivers. You can designate one person as your collector.
8. For students who are willing, you might consider collecting 10,000 rupiah (about 90 cents) day to tip the *kost*¹ cooks/cleaners at the end of your *kost* stay. You can designate one person in each *kost* as your collector.
   a. Do not tip the *kost* owner(s).
   b. Always ask permission from the *kost* owner(s) before you tip the cooks/cleaners. These are their employees and bringing them into the information loop is an important courtesy.

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¹ The Indonesian term *kost* refers to a single-gender dormitory. Most are family-owned.